

Message Text

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ACTION PM-03

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 L-01 MC-01 EA-06 NSC-05 NSCE-00

INR-05 CIAE-00 EUR-08 EB-03 RSC-01 /048 W

----- 115022

R 250113Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6594

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 7069

LIMDIS

FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS KS

SUBJECT: F4D, MISSILE AND M-16 DECISIONS

REF: A SEOUL 6648; B SEOUL 6649; SEOUL 6706

1. IN REFERENCES A AND B ON MY OCT 7 CONVERSATION WITH PRIME MINISTER AND IN REF C, A FOLLOW-UP MESSAGE ANALYZING PRIMIN'S REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO PURCHASE EXOCET MISSILE, I URGENTLY REQUESTED THE FOLLOWING:

(1) FAVORABLE DECISION ON F4D SQUADRON AND PERMISSION TO INFORM ROKS SOONEST;

(2) REJECTION OF ROK REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO BUY EXOCET;

(3) A FORTHCOMING COMMENT ON EARLY AVAILABILITY OF THE HARPOON MISSILE (TO HELP OFFSET OUR REJECTION OF EXOCET); AND

(4) RESTATEMENT OF OUR POLICY AND/OR STATEMENT
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OF NEW CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING ROK SALE OF M-16 TO MOROCCO.

IT IS NOW OVER TWO WEEKS SINCE THOSE MESSAGES WERE TRANSMITTED AND WE HAVE HAD NO RESPONSE.

2. EACH OF THESE QUESTIONS IS A MATTER OF SUBSTANTIAL AND IMMEDIATE INTEREST AT HIGHEST LEVELS OF ROK GOVERNMENT. QUESTION REGARDING MISSILES AND AIRCRAFT ARE AMONG THE HIGHEST IN ROK PRIORITY LISTS AND KOREANS HAVE JUSTIFIABLE NEED TO KNOW OUR DECISIONS IN ORDER TO PROCEED WITH URGENT DEFENSE AND BUDGET PLANNING. IN CASE OF EXOCET MISSILE FRENCH ARE PRESSING KOREANS HARD, AND IF WE DO NOT RESPOND ROKS MIGHT WELL MOVE AHEAD WITH THIS PURCHASE, JUST AS THEY DID IN OERLIKKON GUN CASE. THERE IS ESSENTIAL DIFFERENCE IN THIS CASE HOWEVER; PURCHASE OF EXOCET IS COSTLY AND UNJUSTIFIABLE AND WOULD CAUSE US REAL PROBLEMS WHEREAS OERLIKKON PURCHASE WAS NOT A PROBLEM.

3. I AM WELL AWARE THAT DECISIONS SUCH AS THESE ARE COMPLEX AND REQUIRE CAREFUL CONSIDERATION. INCREASINGLY, HOWEVER, AS ROKS STEP OUT MORE AND MORE ON THEIR OWN, WE WILL HAVE TO BE MORE PROMPT IN RESPONDING TO THEIR NEEDS AND REQUESTS IF WE EXPECT TO EAGERLY HELP AND TO RETAIN OUR POSITION OF INFLUENCE IN AREA OF MILITARY SALES.

4. IN LIGHT OF THESE CONSIDERATIONS I URGE EARLIEST POSSIBLE DECISIONS ON ABOVE QUESTIONS THAT WE CAN PASS ON TO ROKS. AT VERY MINIMUM I SHOULD LIKE TO HAVE SOONEST A STATUS REPORT ON CONSIDERATION THESE QUESTIONS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ARMS, MILITARY SALES, MISSILES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 25 OCT 1974
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: shawdg
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974SEOUL07069
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740304-0872
From: SEOUL
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741016/aaaaamsi.tel
Line Count: 94
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION PM
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: A SEOUL 6648; B SEOUL 6649; SEOUL 67, 06
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: shawdg
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07 AUG 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <07-Aug-2002 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <06 MAR 2003 by shawdg>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: F4D, MISSILE AND M-16 DECISIONS
TAGS: MASS, KS, SSM
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005